

Manhattan Beach – Stadium Court Notes – Saturday, Aug. 21, 2021 – Match 2

10:05 am – #2 Kelly Claes / Sarah Sponcil vs #23 Tina Graudina / Megan Kraft

Head to Head

- This is the first meeting between the teams
- 3 of the 4 players were in the Tokyo Olympics... Claes / Sponcil beat Graudina and Anastasija Kravcenoka 21-13, 16-21, 15-11 in the first pool play match... Claes / Sponcil finished in 9th place while Graudina / Kravcenoka placed 4th

Claes / Sponcil are playing together for the 9th time on the AVP Tour and 33rd time overall

- The team has a best of 2nd three times on the AVP Tour (including in Atlanta), but has 2 FIVB wins
- In 2020 the duo had a 6-5 match record, with 3 losses to Alix Klineman / April Ross and 2 losses to Sara Hughes / Brandie Wilkerson
- In their partnership Claes / Sponcil have only had one AVP tournament in which they have not advanced to the semifinals (placed 5th in the second Long Beach event last year after losing a pair of three-set matches to the event's top two seeded teams)
- As partners on the AVP Tour, the duo has a 25-15 (62.5%) match record, is 24-4 (85.7%) when winning the first set, 1-11 (8.3%) when losing the first set, and is 5-7 (41.7%) in three-set matches

Kelly Claes – age 25 – 6'2" – hometown Placentia, Calif. – currently Fullerton, Calif. – Southern California

- This is Claes' 25th AVP event... she has 1 win, 5 seconds and 12 thirds
- Claes has been in the semifinals in 18 of her 24 AVP events (75% of the tournaments entered)
- Claes won her AVP title in Chicago 2017 when she was 21 years old... she has since played 14 AVP tournaments (before Atlanta) without being able to secure her second AVP victory
- In 2020 Claes led the Tour in kills (9.0 per set), was 3rd in hitting percentage (.444) and 5th in blocks (0.9)

Sarah Sponcil – age 24 – 5'10" – hometown Phoenix, Ariz. – currently Phoenix, Ariz. – Loyola Marymount / UCLA

- Sponcil is playing in her 15th AVP Tournament, with 4 second-place finishes and 4 third-place finishes
- Sponcil reached the championship match in her 2nd ever AVP tournament (Austin 2018)
- In 2020 Sponcil was tied for 5th on the Tour in digs (6.7 per set)

Graudina / Kraft are playing together for the 1st time on the AVP Tour

- Gained entry via a wildcard
- Their combined age (41 years) is less than the oldest woman competing here (Heather Lowe in the qualifier is 46 years old)
- This past year at USC they paired to go 15-1 in matches (only loss was to UCLA's Lexy Denaberg / Savvy Simo, 33-31, 21-16)

Tina Graudina – age 23 – 6'0" – hometown Riga, Latvia – currently Los Angeles, Calif. – Southern Cal

- This is Graudina's 1st AVP tournament ever
- Graudina finished in 4th place in the Tokyo Olympics with Anastasija Kravcenoka... she was 3-1 in three set matches in Tokyo
- Graudina led the field in the Olympics in aces (1.22 per set) and was 8th in hitting percentage (.481)

Megan Kraft – age 18 – hometown San Diego, Calif. – currently San Diego, Calif. – Southern Cal

- This is Kraft's 4th AVP tournament
- Her best finish was a 5th place in Hermosa Beach 2019 with Delaynie Maple